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## NATIONAL IDEALS; CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS.

IF I had one remark and one only to make about National Ideals, it would be this: that the conscious and professed ideals are as straws in the wind; the unconscious or concealed ideals are the real forces that govern mankind. Some philosopher, I think it was Herbart, has compared the unconscious part of human character to the submerged part of an iceberg at sea. The great bulk of the iceberg is under water, invisible and unnoticeable: what we call the iceberg is only the cluster of towers and pinnacles that reach up into the light. The great bulk of human character lies below the water-line of consciousness. We breathe, digest, preserve our balance without thinking of it: we seek what we like and shun what we dislike without thinking of it: we devise the ways of getting or of shunning, we plot, scheme, flatter, slander, bribe and threaten—without thinking of it, without knowing it, without reason or conscience having a hearing on the subject.

The awakened, reasonable, conscious Man is the topmost tower of the whole great structure. But it is the instinctive and unconscious Man that supplies both the mass and the momentum. It is this submerged self, this self which, to use the mediæval phrase “slumbers beneath the threshold,”

that counts for most in the movements of masses and of nations. The instinctive man is not, of course, necessarily wicked; he is the source of good as well as of evil, of love as well as of hate. But it is well to observe him: for if ever you cease to observe him, he will deceive you.

It must have struck every student of History who at the same time cares about contemporary politics, that there is one strange discrepancy between the record of politics in the past and his own consciousness of politics in the present. When he thinks over his political views, makes a speech or argues, he is constantly appealing to ideals, such as Justice, Liberty, Christian principles, patriotism, and he believes that these ideals guide both him and his party. When he reads a good history, he will find the differences of parties and of nations expressed almost exclusively by divergences of interest. The interests of France clashing with the interests of Austria; the interests of the landed classes, the interests of the manufacturers, the interests of the church—these come in history not as occasional factors in the life of nations habitually guided by Justice, Liberty and the rest of it: they come as permanent factors, as the main roots of action. It gives one a shock, this apparent cynicism of History. But the facts bear it out; and more, our own instinctive comments show that we expected it. From the beginning of the world till now it has been the same: farmers have always wanted corn to be dear; manufacturers have wanted labor to be cheap; slave-owners have always approved of slavery; liquor sellers have always approved of an increased consumption of liquor; aristocracies have always approved of their own privileges; leather-sellers have always held that more articles should be made of leather. The slave-owner produces a number of arguments explaining that slavery is a blessing to all concerned in it. The farmer writes pamphlets and books to show that Free Trade in corn will wreck the bases of society. "These," says the one, "are the reasons why I object to emancipation." "Those," says the other, "are the considerations that make me a protectionist."

History turns an amused glance at their reasons and ob-

serves, "The slave-owners naturally resisted emancipation. The farmers were, of course, protectionists." And we are not in the least surprised at her tone. If we find a slave-owning emancipationist or a farmer who believes that even if he loses by it, poor men ought to have cheap bread, we either suspect his motives or we frankly admire him as a noble and exceptional man.

The unconscious ideals are what guide mankind. And among the unconscious ideals there is one especially that is vast and permanent: the very centre of the Ego is stirred by it: the ideal of the man's own prosperity, success, expansion. "I love the thing that makes me great and rich and admired. I hate the thing that pulls me down and makes me small and of no account." And if you argue to me that the first thing is bad and the second good, do you suppose that quivering centre of ambitious life within me will not cry in passionate denial: "No, the thing that hurts me is bad, cruel, treacherous: the thing that soothes and helps me is good." Do you suppose it will not reach out its feelers north, south, east and west for weapons to help it and arguments to slay your arguments?

Self-interest—in no high philosophical sense, but in its ordinary acceptation—is a vast factor in private, in every-day life. But in private life it is strongly and vividly counteracted by social and moral forces which are almost powerless in politics. A farmer who could let his own laborer starve to death before his eyes rather than part with a slice of bread would be a monster. Men are prevented from doing such things by all kinds of natural instincts. But the landed classes who caused thousands to die of famine in 1842 and 1846, in order to keep up their incomes, were very good people indeed. Is that not a fair way of putting it? I think it is. True, they did not say they supported the Corn Laws in order to keep up their income: they said it was because they believed in certain arguments. But why did they believe these arguments? Why did all farmers enthusiastically believe all arguments—whether they understood them or not—that tended one way, while all starving artisans believed the contrary arguments?

The farmers believed their arguments because they wanted good incomes: the artisans believed theirs because they valued cheap bread.

Mere straight-forward self-interest, then, takes us a very long way in the explanation of politics. But obviously not the whole way. There are other instinctive elements. There is especially one other; this same growing and aspiring centre of life within us, the thing that in a baby or in Alexander the Great claims the whole world as its own, has other claims than the merely physical. When it has grasped all it can hold or hope for, when it is for the moment wearied with self-assertion, it likes to be stroked and praised, it likes to reflect upon its nobleness, justice and generosity. Consider the fowls of the air. A very pretty small bird, the great Tit, when hungry, will lift up its beak, split open its brother's head and proceed to eat his brains. It might then be satisfied, think you? Not at all! It has a moral nature, you must please to remember, which demands to be satisfied as well as the physical. When it has finished its brother's brains, it first gets very angry and pecks the dead body; then it flies off to a tree and exults. What is it angry with and why does it exult? It is angry with the profound wickedness of that brother, in consequence of which it was obliged to kill him: it exults in the thought of its own courage, firmness, justice, moderation, generosity and domestic sweetness. That song is its equivalent—poor innocent thing—of a patriotic leading article in the *Kreuz Zeitung* or the *Daily Telegraph* or the *Petit Journal*.

Human nature cries aloud for self-approval: it winces and shudders at the first touch of self-reproach or self-contempt. There are obviously two ways of avoiding self-reproach. The tiresome and precarious way of not doing what you suspect to be wrong or contemptible: and the bold and comparatively safe way of always admiring whatever you yourself happen to do. With the bird above mentioned, this course seems to be easy: he can admire himself all alone. Man, weakened by his increased self-consciousness, has not only to praise himself, but must get others to praise him: must persuade them, argue with them, cajole them, bribe them, frighten them, till

at last amid the applause of all his immediate friends and associates his sensitive and anxious soul can rest in peace. Hence comes hypocrisy, the deep unconscious hypocrisy that governs nations and satisfies man's craving for praise.

"This noble spectacle," to quote the phrase of a famous general about war, "has, after all, an unpleasant side to it." "Never forget," said a Greek sophist to a Greek tyrant, "never forget to slander those you have wronged." He need not have said it. There was a silent and eternal sophist, one may be sure, below the threshold of consciousness, who could be trusted to teach that tyrant, and every tyrant, to slander those whom he had wronged or meant to wrong. "If they are good men" his heart cried within him, "I must be bad! And that I will never be! They are not good men: they are vile and wicked, and they hurt me; and I wish I could kill them over again!" The whole vast force of the unconscious self will, we may be sure, be exerted before all else in these three directions: he will insist on his own satisfaction: he will insist on his own goodness, and he will slander restlessly and ruthlessly those who make him feel sore.

Progress, moral advance, the upward movement of humanity consists mainly in the constant subjugation and direction of the unconscious self by the conscious. On the one hand we gain more power of knowing ourselves: on the other hand the unconscious beast below the threshold itself becomes changed; our actual instincts become a little civilized. This is obvious: it is generally taken for granted. What is not taken for granted is the extreme precariousness and superficiality of the process. If you scratch a Russian, it is said, you find a Tartar. And I dare say if you scratch any civilized European pretty deep, you will find something much the same. But scratch him deeper still and you get glimpses of that wonderful creature on whom our being is based, the great Ape that differed from other apes by its upright posture, its intelligence, its ambition, its exquisite sensitiveness to suffering; and by the fact that alone of the ape tribe it was a ravening beast of prey.

It pains us, of course, to be reminded of the beast's exist-

ence. A certain shock was felt the other day in the House of Commons when the great grantor of testimonials of Honor and Dishonor drew a distinction between Honorable Members and Honorable Men. Yet no one can possibly deny that it is a real distinction. O'Connell in 1838 said it was "horrible to think that a body of gentlemen—men who ranked high in society, who were themselves the administrators of the law, and who ought, therefore, to be above all suspicion—should be perjuring themselves in the (Election) committees of the House of Commons." Of course they were perjuring themselves. It was well known. The leader of the opposition knew it. The government admitted it. The Law Officers of the Crown had remarked upon it. But the political instincts of the Great British nation objected utterly to having such a thing mentioned in public—especially by an Irishman. O'Connell was condemned, reprimanded and very nearly sent to Newgate. It is the first maxim of Parliamentary Debate, as it is the first maxim of decent society, that the existence of the beast within us should be concealed. It is the first necessity of all honest striving for self-improvement, as it is of all true philosophic study, to remember that the beast is there.

We are remaining below ground a very long time; yet once more, before we emerge above the threshold into full consciousness, let us consider one great semi-conscious clash of different ideals and differently constituted minds. On the one side we find the moderate and sensible statesman, Liberal or Conservative, the Peeles, Liverpools, Cannings, Palmerstons—I wish to avoid for obvious reasons the politicians of the present day—on the other side you have a class that is difficult to name; the *Times*, when wishing to be lenient, would call them extremists and faddists; the *Spectator* in its new and improved style appears to describe them as "obscene and brutal." But these qualities are not sufficiently distinctive. They are, in the main, the people who believe in something. The former are the stuff of which Cabinet Ministers are made; they are sagacious, moderate, statesmanlike: they command the attention of the House of Commons. They know what is possible and

what not. They run their heads against no stone walls. They never touch a new cause until it is becoming popular. They never fight for an old one when the battle is certain to be lost. They tend on the whole to avoid ruining their country; they flourish under constitutional governments and they are especially prolific and prominent in England.

Members of the other class may be brilliant, they may be conscientious, well-informed, honorable and wise; but they are not statesmen, and they are distrusted by the House of Commons. They do not study what is possible. They press for what they believe to be right; and they do not carry their Bills. You find them urging new causes that nobody will listen to; defending desperately old causes that are known to be hopeless. It is only in such moments that you notice these people at all; for as long as the old cause was defensible, our statesmen of the first class were defending it; as soon as the new cause is likely to prevail, our statesmen will take it up and carry it to a glorious issue, while its faddist author will be reduced to his normal obscurity.

Let me illustrate what I mean. The most characteristic English statesman, perhaps the greatest statesman, of the last hundred years, was Sir Robert Peel. The good work he did was prodigious. He carried Catholic Emancipation and Free Trade; he reformed the Currency, the Banking System and the Criminal Code. It is a most magnificent record doubtless; but let us examine where the magnificence lies.

Everybody knows that when he carried Catholic Emancipation he had been put in office as an anti-Catholic; just before he carried Free Trade he was the leader of the Protectionists. I do not wish to accuse him of inconsistency or dishonesty. All sensible men are inconsistent; and as for honesty—it is too difficult a quality to define. What I am aiming at is the actual political process by which these reforms were carried.

In the year 1800 a Mr. Boyd proposed the reform of the currency by a gradual return to cash payments. Various economists supported him. Eleven years afterwards Horner proposed the measure in the House of Commons and was defeated. Nineteen years afterwards, the conditions being in all

essentials unchanged, a large number of people had begun to understand what the economists had been telling them all that time. The Liverpool government appointed a committee with Peel as chairman to consider the question, and Peel covered his name with glory by reporting in favor of Horner's proposal. Up to that time he had opposed it.

The case of the Criminal Code is the most instructive of all. The old English code, as we all know, was exceptionally savage and exceptionally imbecile. A man could be hanged for picking a pocket; hanged for stealing five shillings from a shop, hanged for stealing a fish, for robbing a rabbit-warren, for injuring Westminster Bridge, for cutting a hop-vine, for wounding a cow, for maliciously cutting a piece of serge, or for charitably harboring a smuggler; and for some two hundred other offences. In 1751 Bentham began his attack on this system; his works began to be widely read about 1775. In 1808 the first bill to deal with the subject was brought into the House of Commons by Romilly. He was opposed by the government and defeated. He renewed his attempt in 1810, in 1811, in 1812, in 1813. Then, discouraged, he waited three years. He tried again in 1816; again in 1818. Then he died. (It is very important that innovators should not have too much encouragement!) Sir James Mackintosh took up the cause. He succeeded in getting a committee of inquiry appointed in 1819; then he worked on year after year till 1823. Several of the smaller bills had passed the House of Commons during this time, but were thrown out by the Lords. In 1822 Mackintosh obtained a decisive majority in favor of a complete revision of the law. Now comes the statesman's moment; observe what he does. The government realized that opposition to the reform was no longer safe. They had to give way. And they realized at the same moment that really now one came to think of it, they had never had any particular objection to the measure at all. At the same time it was not desirable that an opponent like Mackintosh should have the credit of passing it. Peel rallied his supporters; promised a bill of his own; triumphantly defeated Mackintosh's resolutions. Then he proceeded to earn the gratitude of

posterity and the name of a wise and liberal statesman by passing at one swoop practically all the Criminal Law Reforms that he had been opposing for the last fifteen years.

Do not suppose that I am hinting at dishonesty on the part of Peel. He was remarkably honest. When he said he had changed his mind, he probably had really changed it. And when he changed his mind, he generally confessed that he had. What I want to know is ; what was it that made Peel great, and led the House of Commons to honor and to trust him—to trust him as they never trusted Mackintosh, as they would never have dreamed of trusting Romilly, much less poor Bentham? Was it, perhaps, that the statesman was a practical man, and the Reformers impractical idealists? Not in the least. There is nothing impractical in showing what ought to be done to improve the Currency and the Criminal Law : and nothing practical in refusing to do it when you are told how. Horner and Romilly and Mackintosh were the practical men : Peel the impractical. Was it any question of prudence and compromise? Was it that Peel himself desired the Reforms, but understood those difficulties and dangers which the Reformers failed to see? Not in the least. He frankly disliked and feared the Reforms, and never pretended anything else.

You might suppose again that the reason lay merely in the fact that the philosophers and faddists were “before their time.” That implies some such account of the matter as this. Bentham saw a certain truth before any one else that we know of. It took about fifty years for that truth to drag itself round the nation and eventually reach the doors of the House of Commons. By that time Romilly understood it, and probably Mackintosh. They then proceeded patiently to explain it to Peel and others. They explained persistently for thirteen years, and then Peel began to understand, and so did the majority of the House of Commons. Some had understood it more rapidly, in five or ten years. They were flighty and tinged with faddism. Others never saw it at all ; they were a little stupid and fossilized. But Peel’s was a mind of exactly the right degree of density ; he was just sufficiently slow without being absolutely impervious to reason. If he had under-

stood it in ten years, he would have been abandoned by his powerful friends. If he had not understood it for sixteen years he would have been defeated by the Whigs. As it was, he took just thirteen years, and that was exactly the right time.

"How splendid," said the House of Commons to itself, "to have a leader whose mind moves so precisely at the right rate of speed. What wisdom! What solidity!"

This, no doubt, is all true. But there is something more subtle in the matter than mere difference of time. It is a question of instinct. Doubtless all the rational arguments in favor of Catholic Emancipation, of Free Trade and of Reform which Peel had heard repeated for so many years, did in course of time begin to affect him. But the decisive moment in each case came, not from his reason, but from his gregarious instincts. The majority of the House or the nation was at last definitely veering round in the new direction. The great bell-wether felt the inarticulate stirrings of the flock and strode suddenly forward. And the self beneath the threshold in the House of Commons had confidence in the self below the threshold in Peel. Instinct cried out to instinct and was at once understood. "I want the same things as you: I hate the same things as you. I am the stronger and subtler; follow me!" Peel stated his reasons, of course, in an elaborate speech, and said that the reasons had convinced him. People voted with him and said that the reasons had convinced them. But the reasons had very little to do with it. Men like Bentham or like Bishop Berkeley might be convinced by reasons. The instinctive Man distrusts and despises such persons. If a man is liable to be convinced by mere rational arguments, and follow them out consistently, there is no saying what may happen to him to-morrow. He may be an Anarchist or an Atheist. He may be harmless like Berkeley or pernicious like Robespierre. "In any case," cries instinct, "he is foreign and incomprehensible. He does not like what I like and hate what I hate. He may be wanting something that I do not understand; something horrible, which would hurt me. Let nobody trust him!"

The classes who followed Peel felt that his instincts were theirs ; that was why they trusted him.

So far we have contrasted Peel with the Reformers. The same lesson comes out if we contrast him with the consistent Tories. Croker retired from public life rather than be soiled by the contamination of a reformed Parliament and a purified corporation. Newcastle disengaged his leader and disobeyed his king rather than cease fighting against a measure he believed to be wrong. The learned and kindly old Lord Eldon, balked of his right to hang gypsies, to persecute Dissenters and Roman Catholics, and to send his political opponents to Botany Bay, still fought on for every single privilege or corruption or abomination that his soul loved ; the majority might sweep past him ; but a majority does not make wrong right ; nor are the sentiments that were once applauded by a whole House of Parliament necessarily ridiculous now, because they are only advanced by one tottering old gentleman, courageous and alone.

The advantage of Eldon or Romilly over Peel is that each had a real thing to say. They believed in something definite ; and no gregarious instincts or political necessities could drive them out of believing what they believed. If one of them was wrong, the other was very likely right. But Peel could never be right. Was it that he had contradictory beliefs, or was it perhaps that he had no belief at all, only the statesman's instinct for the right Parliamentary move, which seems, in the statesman, to take the place of real convictions, just as in Thackeray's supposed anatomy of George IV., "waistcoats and then more waistcoats" took the place of a heart.

On the other hand a government of Eldon's would certainly have led to revolution ; and Romilly could not carry his reforms. Peel carried Romilly's reforms, and averted Eldon's revolution. That is the sort of place the world is !

In the eyes of a philosopher the statesman is very deficient in reasoning power. In the eyes of the moralist he has an elastic and callous conscience. In the eyes of the religious man he has no soul. The thing that he has, and he alone, is a steady majority behind him.

We have hitherto been considering our Unconscious Ideals, and the conditions, often arduous and even ruinous, which they impose upon national progress or well-being. I should like to use the brief remainder of this paper in considering two, especially, of the ideals which we consciously profess.

Our two great political parties adopted after the Great Reform Bill, the names Liberal and Conservative, respectively, both of them most engaging names. Now it is not for a moment desirable to analyze what these parties really are, except for one remark in passing. The Liberal party has since the last century professed to be two things—progressive and democratic. The two things have gone together with us, because the progress of the country since 1815 has been in a democratic direction. But, of course, progress need not be democratic. In the east of Europe at the present day it is aristocratic; in Servia and Greece and to some extent in Russia the Progressives or Liberals are in direct opposition to the Democrats (in Servia called Radicals), who represent the artisans and peasants and object to new fangled ways.

That is a digression. But, dismissing any consideration of what the two parties really are, let us make out the ideals which, by their self-given party-names they claim to represent. The basis of conservatism is not to lose what we have laboriously acquired; to safeguard as a precious thing our constitution, our national character, our social organization. That is to say, the basis of conservatism is a great appreciation of the results of progress in the past, and a fear of losing the ground that we have gained, by any mistakes or acts of rashness. What is the basis of Liberalism? Exactly the same, with a slight difference of emphasis. The Conservative says, "We have progressed through the ages to a most satisfactory condition; let us be careful not to lose what we have won." The Liberal replies: "We have progressed through the ages to a most satisfactory condition; let us proceed further in the same direction."

There is no direct contradiction here. Nay, there is real agreement about nine-tenths of the subject, and only a differ-

ence of emphasis about the other tenth. The Conservative is ready to progress if only you will be cautious. The Liberal is ready to be cautious if only you will jog on. This fundamental basis of agreement is one of the causes why English party politics have been on the one hand so smooth and successful, and on the other hand so often ignoble. There was so much agreement that the two parties could always understand one another and make tolerable compromises. There was so much agreement, that politics often looked more like a game between Ins and Outs than a serious contest between believers in opposing principles.

But, after all, what opposition of principle is possible? Both parties represent different stages of the same Ideals, the Ideals of Progress and Order. What party represents the opposite? Is it the Radicals? "We have both a Conservative government and a Conservative opposition," exclaimed Grote in 1838, and shook the dust of Westminster from his feet. Yet Grote, a typical Radical, was not essentially opposed in his principles to Lord John Russell, or even to Peel. He was bolder, perhaps more far-seeing; but his aims were not different.

The opposite ideal to that of Liberal and Conservative is represented by the man who is prepared to say: "We have progressed through the ages to a state that is worse than our first state! We must shatter this bad social order to pieces and go back to simplicity." Most of us have not much patience with this sort of man. "Back to simplicity!" we answer him. "What exactly is your model of simple life: the Red Indian, or the Negro, or the divers royalties of the Cannibal Islands?" "Not any of them," the Revolutionist may reply: "intellect and moral nature do not depend on a complicated social system. Thoreau and Emerson and Tolstoi and Walt Whitman and Rousseau and Plato and Epicurus did not become debased in mind because they turned their backs on civilization and tried to return to simplicity. If modern man ever breaks through his prison of convention and capitalism and wins his way back to simple life, he will bring to it the powers of intellect and character that he now possesses. He will not forthwith believe in Mumbo Jumbo or execute any wife for witchcraft

whenever he has rheumatism. But suppose we accept your challenge," our Revolutionist may continue: "suppose in destroying this present social fabric, we fell at once to the level of the savage, what then? We know all you say about the horrors that are incidental to savage life,—especially when the White Man's helmet has once appeared above the horizon. But we remember what you perhaps forget, that almost all travelers, except those sent out for purposes of annexation, from Herodotus and Tacitus to Mungo Park and Livingstone and Selwyn, have with one voice dwelt upon the light-heartedness and the personal dignity of the normal life of uncivilized man. The normal life of the poor of Europe is not light-hearted and dignified; nor yet that of the rich. There are more and more things without which we are miserable, and with which we are not a whit happier. There are more and more possibilities of human suffering to be endured; more and more screens to hide the sight of the suffering from the authors of it. We civilized men are caught in a great trap; we mean no harm, but our every movement may bring torment to some fellow-man. We buy this tea-pot rather than that, prefer one box of matches to another; we cease to buy some old article of commerce because there is a new one we like better; and the result is that great numbers of men, women and children whom we have never seen or heard of, are forced by other people equally unknown to us, to work themselves into diseases, to become prostitutes or thieves, to starve for want of work, or at best to maintain a stunted life by incessant and meaningless drudgery. It is no one's fault. It is only Order and Progress.

"Again in a simple society people had at least a chance of enjoying their daily work. Under Order and Progress every worker as a normal thing is engaged in doing work which he cannot possibly enjoy, but has to do, ultimately, because he would starve if he did not. He spends his day watching a machine make an enormous number of fractions of a pin all alike; or in adding up columns and columns of pounds, shillings and pence which do not belong to him; or in teaching people whom he does not wish to teach and who do not wish to be taught; or in a thousand other ways, but always, except in a few odd

cases, he spends his days in doing something he does not want to do because he is paid to do it. Nay, there is another thing," this captious rhetorician will continue: "the man is not only doing what he does not like, but is generally doing things or making things that nobody else likes. No one is a whit happier for those millions and billions of pinheads; nor for being taught things he does not want to know; nor for having all the machine-made furniture and clothes and foreign foods and newspapers and cheap cigars. It supports a large population. Of course it does. And is it better for a country to be supporting forty million discontented and degraded human beings than to have only four million 'light-hearted and dignified'?"

Revolution has few adherents in Europe, fewest of all in England. We are a prosperous nation, a prudent nation; and perhaps the most luxurious nation that has ever lived upon the earth. If we are essentially less happy than simpler societies, which is possible, we are not likely to see it. The very essence of the trap of material civilization is that the animal caught cannot draw back, but must go further and further in. If you compare Sir Gorgius Midas with the wildest Gallic-speaking gillie of his remotest shooting-box, you may strongly suspect that in every true sense of the words, the master is poorer, lower, stupider, unhappier and worse than his man. But you may be absolutely sure that Sir Gorgius will not consent to change places with him.

And in the second place it is probably also true that, of all the great writers who have preached a return to simplicity, from Diogenes to Tolstoi, not one has really shown us any road that leads there.

If there is one ideal more than another characteristic of this century in Europe it is what we may crudely term by the one word Philanthropy. Philanthropy is not only a vaunted motive like fairness, impartiality, desire for justice and the like: it is a really active force. Now of course in saying that philanthropy as a professed public force is new and characteristic of this century, one does not for a moment mean that the thing itself is new. It is based on primeval instincts: the being

below the threshold himself is full of sympathy: and men have cared for their suffering fellow-men ever since human society began. The really remarkable thing about modern philanthropy is, I venture to think, that it has become secular and motiveless. Both in antiquity and in the Middle Ages there was a great deal of charity in various forms; but it was all associated with religion or patriotism or the like; and its apparent unselfishness and "irrationality" explained away. It is one of the strongest characteristics of human nature, to try earnestly, by hook or by crook to explain its own unselfish actions—as well as its selfish or malignant actions—by some so-called rational theory. It is a great advance in self-consciousness that we have, in private life at least, accustomed ourselves to the idea that it is quite natural for a man strongly to dislike the notion of other men suffering pain, and gladly to pay money to prevent their doing so.

It is then an ideal held, and largely acted upon, by many people, to keep looking out always for the extremest cases of human suffering and to spend their lives in alleviating them. It is perhaps the noblest, perhaps also the most fruitful, ideal now acting in public life. It is so powerful that it is often attacked; constantly of course counterfeited. Its dangers are the dangers of all generous emotion, lack of knowledge and lack of discretion. For instance, one particular form of this spirit has lately been prominent, the desire for active crusades in relief of distressed or oppressed communities under foreign governments. It is by no means a thing to sneer at, this generous enthusiasm. There is vastly more danger to humanity from lack of sympathy than from excess of sympathy; and if these movements are sometimes to be condemned, it must be not for caring too much about the oppressed people, but for not caring sufficiently about something else. It is not the too vivid imagination; it is the lack of imagination, here as elsewhere, now as always, that makes mischief. However, I have noted down a list—probably incomplete—of those nations which I have seen condemned in English newspapers during the last few years, as deserving for various reasons an immediate crusade against them. These nations are Turkey, Greece, Vene-

zuela, the Afghans, Italy, Spain, the Cubans, the Chinese, Morocco, the Kafirs, Russia, France, Germany and the United States of America! It is perhaps due to oversight, that I have found no one just at present who wishes to make war on Austria. The rage felt by divers persons was in some cases mere patriotic "Hooliganism": in most cases, I should say, it was a really generous emotional force backed by masses of false information. It is so easy to get false information about any foreign power; we get reams of it every day about France; and so enormously difficult to get true information or even the preliminary knowledge that makes true information valuable. For instance, one of the chief causes of the proposed crusades against the French has been that we did not know the system on which evidence is given in a French court. Our English system is to give the witness as little scope as possible; to allow him merely to answer direct questions from a friendly lawyer, and then to let loose a hostile lawyer to badger and confound him. The French plan is to encourage the witness to say all that is in his mind, to draw him out and not to frighten him; especially not to allow the lawyers on either side to stimulate and intimidate him alternately, but to have all questions asked by the mouth of the impartial President of the Tribunal. I have no power of comparing the effectiveness and fairness of the two systems; but in every single French trial that is reported in England at any length, several of our newspapers go into hysterics because the witnesses are not examined by counsel. And when English trials are reported in France, my French friends tell me, there is equal indignation, first because the questions are asked by people who are not impartial, and secondly—this is an odd point—because the Judge and not the counsel for the defence has the last word before the jury retire.

This rather common-place fact is one reason why crusading philanthropy is so often the cause of harm; another is that philanthropy alone cannot start a crusade. It is only when the crusade coincides with the material interest of some influential group of people that it can be carried out. If financiers and officials disapprove, it is powerless. Let us look at this point

closer. The passion of philanthropy, the hatred of oppression, provides throughout the country a great mass of people ready to take fire rapidly at a tale of wrong; ready also, one must confess, to believe the tale of wrong without much sifting of evidence. This is dangerous, but it might not do much harm except for one circumstance. Who is it who have the power of telling these tales of wrong and so stirring up the country? Who can criticize or expose such stories if they are false? Obviously the newspapers—the newspapers which support opposite political parties or are the property of rival capitalists. It is often a fortunate thing that rival capitalists are apt to hate one another! As long as this opposition goes steadily on, newspapers exercise a great deal of mutual criticism and bring out, both intentionally and unintentionally, a vast quantity of trustworthy information. But if ever the party system fails, or if ever the handful of men who own all the great Dailies happen to coincide in their interests or their prejudices, then heaven help the nation that is dependent upon them for its facts!

Even in the most favorable circumstances, when proprietors and wire-pullers slumber and no sinister influences are at work, how far in general is a newspaper calculated to keep a nation reasonable or informed of the truth? About as well as loose cannon on a ship's deck are calculated to serve the ship for ballast. When the ship is steady all is well. At the first heel to port, the cannon charge at the port bulwarks: if she veers to starboard back to starboard run the guns.

Consider the essence of what a newspaper is. It is a great financial concern, with say £250,000 of capital, depending for its very life on its advertisements, while its advertisements depend on its circulation. It is bound every morning to say things that please some 200,000 people (or more, if possible), and if it fails to please them it dies! What a tremendous undertaking that is! To please 200,000 different people every morning: and to please them, too, better than any other paper at the same price. It is difficult to conceive how the thing is done. Only one part of it appears obvious: that if you are lucky enough to see some subtle prejudice, some wave of unreasoning passion growing and spreading among the public

that you appeal to, then your chance has come; you know what your public will like to read. But if you miss that chance, if you try to correct their passions and contradict their errors—why who will pay you money for the pleasure of being corrected and contradicted every day at his breakfast?

From the *Times* and the *Journal des Débats* to the *Libre Parole* and *Daily Mail* the conditions of financial life for a newspaper are essentially the same. Let us analyze a favorable instance. The *Times* is an English paper costing 3d.; the *Journal des Débats*, a French paper costing 2d. Only rich people, as a rule, will pay 3d. or 2d. for a daily paper. So, as the *Journal des Débats* has to please rich French people the *Times* is bound to please rich English people. It must confirm their faith in their own good qualities, it must praise the statesman that they admire. It must find arguments to support what rich English people think, and to bring to pass what rich English people want. It must hurt the feelings and damage the reputations of rich English people's opponents, it must delay or prevent the Reforms which might make rich English people less rich. Besides this, of course, the man who pays 3d. for his newspaper will expect an exceptionally good newspaper. It must have a special abundance of information, of two sorts: accurate information on the things where its public will be pleased with *bona fide* knowledge: carefully doctored information where the naked facts are damaging or unpalatable. There must be correspondents and a complete organization all over the world, to publish those facts which rich English people would on the whole like published, to conceal, twist or smother the facts which rich English people do not care to be told.

On the other hand, living as it does in great publicity, and appealing to a highly educated class, it must be in general a well-written and gentlemanly journal; and it ought never to be so grossly inaccurate or unfair or inconsistent as to create an obvious and damaging scandal or to shock the feelings of its own partisans. The man who writes is, of course, every bit as good and as conscientious as the man who makes boots or who preaches sermons. But the newspaper is different from the journalist. The man has his own beliefs and his sense of

honor : he can remain silent when he will, can feel shame, can face unpopularity or money loss. But the Thing has no beliefs nor sense of honor, and if it does not make money it dies. If Brown's views, as printed yesterday, gave displeasure; let Jones's opposite views be printed to-morrow. The paper will never blush because it has changed !

You can think of exceptions to all these sayings. One knows of newspapers that have preached unpopular causes, that have taken their readers to task and made them face unpleasant facts, that have been willing to lose money and to endure persecution. That is only to say—and this is the thought that I fain would close with—that in the teeth of all material opposition, in defiance of all the subterranean influences of instinct there are men who work and suffer for things they believe to be good. They may be right in their beliefs and they may be wrong. It is absurd to say that the world is wicked, and that those against the world are sure to be right. "When in temper and where his own interest was not concerned," it was said of a famous Lord Chief Justice, "When in temper and where his own interest was not concerned, my Lord Jeffreys became the Bench with extraordinary dignity." Much the same compliment can be paid to the public voice of masses of men. If they know the main facts and are disinterested, the verdict of the majority will be just. But on nearly all questions that stir men's hearts or try their mettle, questions where a class judges between itself and another class, where a nation judges between itself and another nation, in such tribunals we must not look for a disinterested verdict: one of the litigants is absent; the court is crowded with counsel denouncing him: and the voices under the threshold are bitter and tyrannous and strong. The voices are a little nobler in the case of a nation than they are in the case of a man: in the case of a nation struggling for its freedom or claiming only such rights as are compatible with the same rights in other nations, the voices are almost entirely noble. At the worst they say "*we*" instead of "*I*," and that is a great difference. But that very advantage makes them more dangerous, plausible and reckless in their essential claims. The man whose self-consciousness

could be on the alert against his own selfish instincts, has often no suspicion of the injustice of his national instincts. In every nation of Europe from England and France to Russia and Turkey, in almost every nation in the world from the Americans to the Chinese and the Finns, the same whisper from below the threshold sounds incessantly in men's ears. "We are the pick and flower of nations: the only nation that is really generous and brave and just. We are above all things qualified for governing others: we know how to keep them exactly in their place without weakness and without cruelty. Other nations may have fine characteristics, but we only are normal and exactly right. Other nations boast and are aggressive, we are modest and claim only what is our barest due, though we cannot help seeing our own general superiority, and every unprejudiced observer admits that our territories ought to be enlarged. We are above all things reasonable. The excellence of our rule abroad is proved in black and white by the books of our explorers, our missionaries, our administrators and our soldiers, who all agree that our yoke is a pure blessing to those who bear it. It is only those envious and lying foreigners who dare to dispute the fact." Expansionists, Nationalists, Chauvinists, Irredentists, Pan-slavists, German Colonials,—how absurd they seem to us in every country but our own. Yet in every country they form, backed by the undercurrents of national life, a strong and persistent force, valuable if controlled, dangerous if gratified, and fraught with all the elements of explosion when other danger is in the air.

There is also—not in every country, not, I dare say, among the Chinese or the Finns, but in most countries of Europe, a small party which does not believe in the supra-normal rights of its own countrymen, which values good-will more than glory, and judges of national honor by standards approaching those by which it judges of personal honor; which believes in international morality, in the coöperation of nations for mutual help, in the ultimate Fraternity of Mankind.

A poor and despised class these in every community—dreamers, sentimentalists, doctrinaires, hypocrites, traitors—they have at least one advantage over the ultra-patriots. It is an old

rule of logic that "truth by truth is never contradicted." But the "patriots" of one country by the "patriots" of every other are contradicted always in every item of their creed. These other parties in every other country of Europe are pleading on the whole for the same cause and upholding the authority of the same tribunal—the disinterested judgment of each man's conscience in the first place; and, as a Court of Appeal, whenever it is attainable, not the voice of one class, not the voice of one nation, but the disinterested verdict of civilized Humanity.

Few in each separate country, they are many in all countries taken together. And they will need that thought to comfort them; for in their own homes they will have little popular support or official recompense. They will need often to search their hearts and to steel their courage; and often to remember that famous statesmen and writers and preachers are not necessarily blessed when all men speak well of them; for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

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#### MEDICAL ETHICS.

THE questions which relate to medical ethics, or to the modes of conduct required by the claims, the duties, and the responsibilities of medical practitioners, seem to fall naturally into two chief categories, according as they relate to the conduct of practitioners towards the public and towards patients, or towards each other. The former class of questions are undoubtedly the more important; but, in the estimation of the profession itself, the latter sometimes appear to be the more interesting. They certainly lend themselves more readily to discussion, and they furnish a larger number of issues as to which divergent or even opposite views may not unreasonably be entertained. The duties which a medical practitioner owes to his patient and to the public, and those which he owes to himself and to his calling, may in certain circumstances appear not to be entirely harmonious; but there can scarcely ever be